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FROM THE

CRYPTID

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SLIDE INTO THE SLOPPY SLIMY CRYPT OF TERROR, FLESH-PACK. THIS IS YOUR CAVEN CARPENTER OF COLD CORPSES, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, ALL READY TO START THE BRAG, ROLLING WITH A WHALE OF A TALE OF TERROR... A BIT OF BLUES I DUG UP FROM AMONG A BILE OF OLD MARINESCRIPTS THAT WERE CLUTTERING UP A CLANKY CORNER OF MY CASHER-CAVERN. YOU'LL RETCH AT THE WRETCHED GAS PLAYED BY CAPTAIN MATT STARKE... A DRUNK OF A SEAMAN WHO IS WAITING IN EILEEN HARPER'S MODEST APARTMENT OVERLOOKING THE SAN DIEGO DOCKS RIGHT NOW TO BEGIN THIS OBOODOUS DRIS I CALL.

FOREVER AMBERGRIS

HEH! STARKE'S THE NAME. CAPTAIN MATT STARKE, SKIPPER OF THE FREIGHTER SOLEFANA. I'M ASHORE NOW... HAPPY TO BE TAKIN' MY BASE ON THIS PLUSH SOFA JONK IN THIS NEAT LITTLE HARBOR-APARTMENT... SLOWLY BILLOWS OF COOL BLUE SMOKE FROM THIS HAWMA FIFTY-CENTER... AN' DREAMIN' OF HOW I'LL SOON BE MASTER OF THE TRIMMEST LITTLE SAIL IN THIS OR ANY PORT. I'M HAPPY 'CAUSE I LOVE EILEEN ENOUGH TO HAVE MISSEDERED A MAN T' GET HEAT AND NOW...

SHE'S MINE...



YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! I MURDERED. AND THERE IS NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO ABOUT IT. NOW, I'VE GOT THE MONEY. I'M RICH. AN' I'M WAITIN' FOR EILEEN T' COME OUT OF HER ROOM SO'S I'LL HAVE E'VERYTHIN'! SCUSE ME...



HEY, EILEEN! BLAST IT! HURRY UP! STOP FORTYIN' ME. I'VE BEEN DRESSIN' AN' COMIN' OUT OR I'LL COME IN THERE AN' GET YOU. READY OR NOT?



WAIT'LL YOU SEE HER! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! GOT THE PRETTIEST FACE IN THE WORLD! AN' HER FIGURE. WELL, JUST WAIT AN' SEE! I DOUGHT I'D BE HAPPY, BUT SOMETHIN' KEEPS HANGIN' AT ME. KEEPS BOTHERIN' ME!



I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY THAT WHALE THREW UP RIGHT THERE AND THEN. JUST WHEN I WAS BOTHERIN' HIM. I NEVER SAW A WHALE DISGROSS BEFORE, NOR HAVE I HEARD OF ANYONE ELSE THAT'S SEEN IT HAPPEN.



NOW THERE'S A queer combination of things for a man in love t' be thinkin' of... A **BORDESS** WOMAN AND A **WHALE SPIN**. BUT I CAN'T HELP IT. I GOT THE SAME OLD FEELIN' IN MY INWARDS AS I GET WHEN MY SHIP IS NEARIN' A REEF IN A THICK FOG. I CAN'T SEE THE REEF BUT INSTINCT TOLLS ME IT'S THERE...



AN' SOME KIND OF CRAZY INSTINCT IS MADDEN AT ME RIGHT NOW. MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME. LET ME TELL YOU 'BOUT EILEEN AND ME... AND MY SHIP... AND THE WHALE... AN' THE MAN I MURDERED.



BUT WHERE TO BEGIN ON THAT WARM SPRING MORNING, I RECKON, WAS THE **START** OF IT? WE'D DROPPED ANCHOR HERE IN SAN DIEGO AND ME AND MY FIRST MATE, BEN HARPER, WERE HURRYIN' DOWN THE GANG-PLANK...



I WANT YOU TO HUNK WITH US THIS TIME, CAP'N. I WANT YOU T' MEET EILEEN!

ANOTHER TIME, MATEY! I GOT SOME GOOD ADDRESSSES IN DIEGO...

FOR SEVEN MONTHS... FROM THE TIME BEN HARPER'S SIGNED ON MY SHIP. ALL I'D HEARD FROM HIM WAS EILEEN... HOW BEAUTIFUL THIS BRIDE OF HIS WAS. AND NOW I HAD TO MEET HER...



WELL, HAVE DINNER WITH US THEN, MATE. AT LEAST THAT...

WELL, ALL RIGHT, BEN. BUT JUST DINNER THEN I'LL BE ON MY WAY!

WITH BEN HARPER BEIN' THE KIND OF A CHAP HE WAS... NOT AT ALL ON THE RUSSIED SIDE... AND NOT MUCH ON LOOKS EITHER... I NEVER FIGURED HIM TO HAVE LANDED ANYTHING LIKE THE BEAUTY THAT GREETED HIM WHEN HE REACHED THEIR APARTMENT...



OH, MONEY. I THOUGHT THIS TRIP WOULD NEVER END!

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME, BEN, DARLING...

"BUT I COULD SEE FROM THE WAY THAT SHE TURNED HER HEAD SO'S HE COULDN'T KISS HER ON THE LIPS THAT EILEEN WASN'T AS GLAD TO SEE HIM AS SHE MADE OUT. FACT IS, AS HE WAS LOVIN' HER, SHE KEPT LOOKIN' PAST HIM TO ME..."

"SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME... TALKIN' WITH HER EYES... FIRST CURIOSITY, THEN AN INVITATION... YELDING IT WAS AN ELECTRIC THING THAT PASSED BETWEEN US... SOMETHING WE BOTH UNDERSTOOD IN THOSE FIRST QUICK MOMENTS WITHOUT HAVING SPOKEN A WORD..."

"BEN INTRODUCED US, BUT I FELT I ALREADY KNEW HER BETTER'N HE DID. I FOLLOWED THEM INTO THE LIVING ROOM, WATCHIN' EILEEN, TALKIN' IN PARTS MOVIN' SENSUOUSLY. THERE WERE PICTURES BURNIN' IN MY BRAIN, TATTOOED WITH A WHITE HOT NEEDLE..."

"MATT'N SEEMED TO HAVE DINNED WITH US, HOM... BUT HE WON'T STAY ON WITH US. HE'S GOT OTHER PLANS..."



"BEN MOVED OFF TOWARDS THE KITCHEN..."

"SEE IF YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT GETTIN' MATT TO *STAY* WITH US WHILE I GO MIX-UP SOME DRINKS."

"SURE, BEN..."



"EILEEN DID SOMETHIN', ALL RIGHT. SHE MOVED TOWARDS ME, SLOWLY, HER HIPS SWAYIN' EVER SO EASY. SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME WITH THOSE SOFT, INVITIN' EYES, AND THEN SHE SPOKE WITH THAT SOFT, MELLOW, HONEY-PEELED, EXCITING VOICE..."

"YOU... WILL... STAY... ON... WITH... US... WON'T YOU, MATT?"

"... I... I..."



"SEVEN MONTHS AT SEA WITHOUT SO MUCH AS SLUMPERIN' A WOMAN MAKES A MAN ACT WITHOUT THINKIN', I GUESS. I HAD A PRENIED IMPULSE TO THROW MY ARMS AROUND EILEEN... PULL HER TIGHT AGAIN' ME... CRUSH MY HUNGRY LIPS AGAIN' HERS. AND SUDDENLY I WAS GON' IT?..."

"SHE PULLED BACK AT FIRST, THEN CHANGED HER MIND, AND MOVED IN TIGHT. SHE MELTED... BLENDED... LIKE WE WERE ONE. THAT'S HOW QUICK WE HIT IT OFF TOGETHER. EILEEN AND ME? I WAS PARTIN' HEAVY AND WIPIN' HER LIPSTICK WHEN SHE TENSED..."

"WHY'D YOU DO THAT, MATT?"



"SHE KNEW WHY I DID IT, THE TANTALIZING DEVIL, SO I GAVE HER A FLIP ANSWER JUST AS BEN, POOR, STUPID, LOVESICK BEN, CAME IN WITH THE DRINKS."

"...I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO KISS THE BRIDE BEFORE THIS!"

"HAH! I TOLD YOU YOU'D LIKE EILEEN. CAPN! GO ON, BE MY GUEST!"

"ER... I... I THINK I'VE TALKED MATT INTO STAYING, BEN..."



"I GAVE EILEEN A BASHFUL PECK ON THE CHEEK AND BEN GRINNED, PLEASED AS PUNCH THAT I WAS PLEASED WITH HIS WIFE. PLEASED?" I WAS CRAZY ABOUT HER... TORTURED 'CAUSE BEN WAS ALWAYS CLOSE BY IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED. BUT THEN, ONE DAY, I GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO EILEEN..."

"WHY'D YOU MARRY HIM? YOU DON'T LOVE HIM!"

"THAT'S PUTTING IT BLUNTLY, ISN'T IT? WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A BLUNT ANSWER! SECURITY!"



"BEN MAKES GOOD MONEY! HE NEVER SPENT MUCH BEFORE HE GOT MARRIED! HE WANTED SECURITY TO ME, MATT... A nice HOME... CLOTHES... FOOD... EVEN THIS LITTLE CAP..."

"AND NOW, NOW THAT YOU'VE MET ME? I CAN SEE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME. YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME!"

"I DO LOVE YOU, MATT! I'VE NEVER MET A MAN I LOVED SO MUCH! BUT I WANT THE THING BEN'S MONEY GETS FOR ME..."

"AND I WANT YOU, EILEEN. I'M GOIN' TO HAVE YOU SOMEDAY, TOO! I DON'T KNOW NOW BUT I WILL! I SWEAR IT..."



"THE TWO WEEKS WENT BY AND IT WAS TIME TO SHOVE OFF AGAIN. I SAW EILEEN ONCE MORE THE WAY I DID THAT FIRST DAY... WITH BEN'S ARMS AROUND HER... SHE LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER, BUT THIS TIME, WHAT SHE SAID WAS MEANT FOR ME..."

"BE GOOD... GOODBYE, DARLING! I'LL BE COUNTING EVERY SECOND TILL YOU COME BACK TO ME..."



"AND LATER, BEN AND I STOOD ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SULTANA, WATCHING BEN DISAPPEAR INTO THE MIST. THERE WAS NO TALKIN' BETWEEN US... ONLY OUR QUIET THOUGHTS... HIM REMEMBERING THOSE SMOKE NIGHTS WITH EILEEN... AND ME, HATTIN' HIM FOR THEM, KNOWIN' IT WAS ME SHE WANTED..."



"AND I MADE UP MY MIND RIGHT THEN THAT MY FIRST MATE, BEN HARPER, WOULD NOT BE COMIN' BACK FROM THIS VOYAGE WITH ME..."

"I KNOW, CAPN! YOU OUGHT TO HAVE SOMEBODY LIKE EILEEN TO COME HOME TO!"

"MAYBE SO, BEN... MAYBE SO..."



WHAT IS THERE ABOUT A MAN THAT LETS HIM LOVE ONE WOMAN... LONG FOR HER THE WHOLE TIME HE'S AWAY... AND THEN, NO SOONER 'N HE GETS PORT, SET ABOUT HUNTIN' FOR ANOTHER TO BE WITH. BEN AND HE WERE NO DIFFERENT. FROM BOMBAY TO OSAKA, JAPAN...



AFTER A PLEASANT VISIT, I REMEMBERED OTHER BUSINESS THAT NEEDED TENDIN' TO DO, SHOES IN HAND, I PEEDED OVER TO A PAPER WALL AND CALLED OUT...



THEN I VISITED A CRYING TOOTHY GENT WHO COULD FURNISH A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS. MOST OF THEM UNWHOLESOME. HE MARKED A CRUDE BLACK CIRCLE AROUND A TINY DOT ON A GREASY OLD MAP FOR WHICH I GAVE HIM ONE CRISP U.S. DUCK.



I LEFT THE SHODDY LITTLE SHOP AND MADE MY WAY BACK THROUGH CROOKED JAMMED STREETS TOWARD THE SHIP, MY HEAD SPINNING WITH THOUGHTS OF EILEEN AND BEN AND HOW HE WASN'T GOIN' TO SEE HER AGAIN... NOT IF I GOT MY DUCK'S WORTH OF INFORMATION OUT OF THAT HISSIN' GRININ' OLD GENT...



WE WERE UNDER WAY AGAIN BEFORE MIDNIGHT. BEN WAS LYIN' ON HIS BUNK, WEARY, BUT NOT TOO TIRED TO TALK ABOUT HIS FAVORITE TOPIC... EILEEN. I SAT AT MY DESK, STUDYING THE GREASY OLD MAP.



WHY'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, MATT? OSAKA WAS OUR LAST PORT OF CALL.

THIS IS A PRIVATE DEAL, BEN, A FRIEND OF MINE IN BOMBAY ASKED ME TO DROP A BARREL OF FUEL OIL AT THIS LITTLE ISLAND. I PROMISED I WOULD.



WE REACHED THE TINY SPECK OF FORSAKEN CORAL AND LAID THE THIRD NIGHT OUT. EXCEPT FOR A GLIMMER OF LIGHT HERE AND THERE IN THE BLACKNESS, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF LIFE ON THE ISLAND. WHILE THE BARREL OF FUEL OIL WAS BEING LOADED INTO THE DINNIE I ELECTED BEN TO TAKE IT ABOARD...

IS THERE TIME FOR ME TO GO SOME HUNTIN', SKIPPIT? HEY, BEN. DEAR MATEY, I'LL WAIT FOR YOU...



'BEN' REACHED EXACTLY AS I'D EXPECTED HIM TO REACT. I WATCHED HIM ROWACROSS THE LAGOON TO A SMALL DOCK AND TIE-UP. A MINUTE LATER HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK, RAT-INFESTED TOWN OF THE ORIENT'S ISLAND DUMPS—GROUND FOR ITS CONDEMNED... CONDEMNED TO DEATH, THAT IS, BY **BUBBING PLAGUE! THE BLACK DEATH! NOT THIS DEATH...**



'BEN' CAME DOWN FAST. HE STARTED SWELLIN' AROUND HIS ARMPITS AND OTHER PLACES. SOON, A FESTERING, GREENISH-YELLOW SORE COVERED HIM AND A STINKING, NAUSEATING SUBSTANCE Oozed FROM HIS FLESH. I KEPT CLEAR OF HIS QUARTERS FROM THEN ON AND ORDERED THE CREW TO DO THE SAME...

I KNOW THE SYMPTOMS... THE SORE'S BORN, POISONIN' OF THE BLOOD, AND THAT COUGH. THAT'S WHEN IT'S **DANGEROUS** THE PLAGUE'S IN HER **LOINS** NOW. A MAN CAN CATCH IT EVEN **TALKIN'** T' HIM.

BUBBING PLAGUE... GAST... THE BLACK DEATH!



'IT WAS ALMOST DARK WHEN MY FIRST MATE RETURNED TO THE SHIP, EXHAUSTED BUT PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. HE'D HUNTED DOWN AND GOTTEN' WHAT HE WANTED. HE'D GOTTEN **MORE** THAN HE WANTED! IT TOOK TWO DAYS, THEN BROKE OUT...

...CAN'T PICK MYSELF UP OUT OF M' BUNK, MATE. NOT... FEVER... CHILLS. I'M SICK...

YOU'LL HAVE TO DOCTOR YOURSELF, BEN. WE'RE A THOUSAND MILES FROM THE NEAREST PORT...



'AT THE MENTION OF THE DREAD, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, THE CREW FLEED AND SHUDDERED AS ONE MAN. IT WAS PART OF MY PLAN! LETTIN' THEM WORRY... REMINDIN' THEM. BUT ONE DAY, THEY FOUND SOMETHIN' ELSE TO OCCUPY THEIR MINDS. I FOUND 'EM TOSSIN' GARBAGE OVERBOARD...

WHAT'RE YOU MEN **DOIN'**?

FEEDIN' THE **WHALE**, CAP'TN STANKE. HE'S BEEN **FOLLOWIN'** US ALL MORNIN'! SEET?



I'VE SEEN WHALES BEFORE BUT NEVER SO CLOSE AS THAT GREAT BALL BREAK. HE LEPT UP WITH THE SHIP... **OPENIN'** HIS TANKIN' CAVE OF A MOUTH TO LET THE GARBAGE IN...



'WHAT KEPT BEN HARPER ALIVE, I'LL NEVER KNOW. MAYBE HE WAS RAGIN' AGAINST DEATH JUST TO SEE EILEEN ONCE MORE. ANYHOW, THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE TERRIBLE ONES AND I TRIED TO RELAX BY TOSSIN' CHUNKS OF MOLDY BEEF AND OTHER REFUSE TO THE WHALE TAILIN' US...



'THE WHALE STAYED WITH US. SOMETIMES HE'D ROLL AND DIVE AND HE WOULDN'T SEE HIM FOR HOURS, THEN SOMEBODY'D YELL "THAR 'E BLOWS" AND HE'D BE BACK GRASIN' ANOTHER GARBAGE FEAST...



"AT NIGHT I'D GO OUT ON DECK, BREATHIN' IN THE SALTY WARM PACIFIC AIR, AND I'D THINK ABOUT ME AND ELSBEN. I WAS THINKIN' OF HER THE RIGHT ONE OF THE MEN SAME A-BURNIN' AND SCREAMIN'..."

"...HIS FACE IS ALL ROTTEN BLACK, CAPT'N... AND HIS FLESH IS MORN' LIKE IT'S—CHOKED—CRAWLIN' WITH MAGGOTS!"

"SEN, OUT OF HIS ROOM! GOOD LORD! HOW COULD THE MAN WALK?"

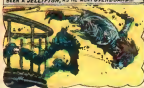
"AND THEN, I SAW HIM! BEN WAS A WALKIN' DEAD! HIS BODY A MASS OF BLACK ROT. SMALL SPONY-DANG DROPPIN' AWAY WITH EACH STUFF STAGGERIN' STEP HE TOOK. HIS CLOTHES WERE A TATTERED STINKY MESS OF GREENISH DRIED OOZE AND CONGEALED BLACK BLOOD. MY OWN-ER CAME UP SOLD IN MY THROAT."

CHOKED

"I HOLLERED FOR SPOTLIGHTS AS HE STUMBLERED ACROSS THE DECK. MEN CAME RUSHIN' WITH GAFFS, THEIR FACES TWISTED IN DISGUST. BEN KEPT SHUFFLIN' DOWN TOWARDS ME."

"GET HIM OVER THE SIDE, YA BILGE LIKE! DUMP HIM BEFORE HE HAS US ALL WASTIN' AWAY WITH THE BLACK ROT!"

"THEY TRIED HOORIN' THEIR GAFFS INTO BEN, BUT THE TIPS CAME AWAY WITH HORRIBLE SOBS OF FOUL-SMELLIN' ROTTEN FLESH. THEY TRIED SHOVIN' WITH THE POLES. BEN SOT OUT IN TWO BY THE ANK, WITH NO MORE SOUND THAN IF HE'D BEEN A JELLYFISH, AS HE WENT OVERBOARD."



"BY MORNIN', I FELT BETTER ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. WE'D LEFT WHAT WAS LEFT OF BEN HUNDREDS OF MILES BEHIND US AND I'D COMMITTED A MURDER NOBODY'D BE ABLE TO PIN ON ME. I HAD MY MIND ON LOVELY ELSBEN WHEN TOM BALLARD, MY SECOND MATE, CALLED ME TO THE RAIL."

"OUR WHALE'S STILL WITH US, CAPT'N"

"THAT'S RIGHT! BUT HE'S ACTIN' QUEER... ISN'T HE?"



"AN' THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPERED! THE HUGE BALL SPERM SHATTERED CONCLUSIVELY. A TREMENDOUS YELLOW AND GREY BUBBLING MASS OF WAX-LIKE STUFF SPURTED OUT OF HIS CAUTEROUS NOOTH, BUBBLIN' UNOULATING ON THE OIL-PA SURFACE."

"LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, CAPT'N! THAT STENCH IS CHOKIN' ME!"

"NOIN, BY HEAVENS! THAT'S WHALE SPERM, AMBERGRIS!"



"AMBERGRIS? FLOATIN' GOLD! THE SPERM OF A SPERM WHALE, NEEDED FOR THE BEST PERFORMED THAT FOUL-SMELLIN', FATTY NEED WAS WORTH A FORTUNE."

"REVERSE ENGINES! PREPARE TO LOWER ANNY ALL BOATS! A HUNDRED DOLLAR BONUS TO EACH MAN WHO HELPS."



"I EMPTIED A HUNDRED BARRELS OF MY FUEL OIL CARGO TO HOLD MY AMBERGRIS. A WEEK LATER WE DOCKED IN SAN DIEGO, WHERE I CALLED BLAZES FROM A PORT HEALTH OFFICIAL...BUT NOT UNTIL AFTER I'D DISPOSED OF THE AMBERGRIS."

COMING INTO PORT AFTER A PLAGUE DEATH ON YOUR SHIP MAY COST YOU YOUR PAPERS, CAPTAIN STARK!

THE DEVIL WITH MY PAPERS. I'M A RICH MAN AND I'M GOING TO MARRY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD!

"THE PERFUME MAKER NOT ONLY PAID ME SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND DUCKS FOR MY AMBERGRIS, BUT ALSO SENT ME A FLAGON OF THE SCENT MADE FROM IT. WHEN I FINALLY GOT OUT OF QUARANTINE, I BROUGHT IT TO EILEEN."

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW BEN DIED, MATT! ALL I KNOW IS YOU ARE HERE... THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!

HERE, BABY! HERE'S ENOUGH PERFUME TO BATHIE IN! AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!

SO THAT'S IT? NOW, EILEEN IS IN HER ROOM THERE, GETTIN' INTO 'SOMETHING COMFORTABLE'. AS SHE PUT IT, WHICH IS PROBABLY A SHEER BLACK MISLEAD, AND I'M THINKING ABOUT WHY SOME STUPID WHALE THREW UP WHEN IT DIED...



I OUGHT TO BE GLAD IT HAPPENED! IF IT HADN'T, TO BE SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS POORER, AND... AND... OH, LORD!

BEN! THAT BLASTED WHALE MUST HAVE SWALLOWED THE BLACK-ROTTED DISEASED REMAINS OF BEN HARPER! THAT'S WHY HE TREW UP!

EILEEN! EILEEN, OPEN UP! QUICK! DON'T USE THAT PERFUME, EILEEN! DON'T USE IT!



EILEEN HARPER COMES OUT OF HER ROOM NOW, GRINNING ECSTATICALLY... THE BLACK SPONGY, ROTTING FLESH DROPPING FROM HER FACE. THE WHITE BONE GLEAMING THROUGH HERE AND THERE, CAPTAIN STARK SCREAMS IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT AND STENCH OF HER...



WHY NOT, MATT? IT'S SUCH A LOVELY-SMELLING PERFUME, DARLING.

YAAAAHHHHH!

HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S THE LEAD-OFF PARR, YELP-HOURS. DID YOU NOTICE THAT EILEEN REALLY DIDN'T LIKE THE PERFUME, MATT SAYS HE'D DIDN'T YOU SEE THE WAY HER FACE DROPPED? WELL, I GOT A DATE WITH MY EDITORS TO PLAY A GAME OF HEARTS. WE USE REAL DRES I'LL BE BACK LATER WITH ANOTHER TERROR TOME, NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE MULL-KEEPER, BY THE WAY, THE WHALE IN THIS TOME WAS SORRY HE BROUGHT THE WHOLE THING UP!



- THE END -

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

WEE, HEE! SCARED, HNT? GOOD! OLD HAL DEMER-HICK, O.K., HAS SOFTENED YOU UP FOR THE CHILL! NOW YOUR VAULT-KEEPER IS READY TO PUT YOU ON ICE WITH A GRIPPINGLY GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF A BREEDY BOON WHO GURMBED HIS WAY INTO A DIVE! HE WAS A REAL BONE GUY WHEN HE WAS THROUGHT TO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND LISTEN TO THIS EERIE EPISODE I CALL...

BURIAL at SEA

YOU'RE NAME IS BARNET HOAG. YOU'VE ALWAYS CRAVED SOLITUDE AND NOW YOU'VE FOUND IT ON THIS BLEAK LONELY, WINDSWOFT, SUN-TORTURED FLORIDA KEY. . . THIS GRIM ACRE OF UNREFLED PARADISE. YOU GUIDE YOUR OLD CAR INTO A SANDY, BRISTLING PALMETTO PATCH, AND YOU UNLOAD YOUR GEAR. . .



IT'S... IT'S LIKE ANOTHER WORLD... MY OWN PRIVATE WORLD! IT'S JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!



SWEETENING IN A SEA OF SWEAT, BASKING UNDER THE LOAD OF FISHING TACKLE, BAIT BOX, FOOD HAMPER AND GALLON JAR OF WATER, YOU'VE TEMPORARY RELIEF IN THE SHADE OF SAUNT LONG-NECKED PINES AS YOU TRUDGE TOWARD THE GLARING WHITE BEACH.



YOU PASS A LINE OF SILENT PALMS LEFT LEANING LANDWARD BY SOME LONG AND VIOLENT WIND THAT HAD ONCE ROARED BY. AND, UNLOADING YOUR EQUIPMENT ONTO THE BURNING SAND, YOU STUDY THE GURDAILY-SHAPED BROTESQUE MANGROVE TREES, THEIR EXPOSED BRACKLEKE ROOTS INTERTWINING, SPRAWLING FROM THE BRINE AT THE SHORE.



YOU TURN AT THE SOUND AND SEE NO FISH, BUT AN ALMOST-NAKED, BEARDED, GORRY-BROWN OLD MAN WITH GREY HAIR DOWN TO HIS SHOULDERS EMERGE FROM THE DEPTHS AND MAKE HIS WAY TOWARD THE BEACH...



THEN, BARNET HOWL, YOU SWEAR UNDER YOUR BREATH!... BECAUSE YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE. YOUR SOLITUDE IS GONE. YOU BEGIN TO FEEL H... TO LEAVE IN DISBURT... WHEN YOU FEEL THE SUDDEN, STRONG TUGGING ON YOUR LINE...



THE FISH BREAKS WATER, STRUGGLING TO SPIT OUT THE HOOK AND YOU SEE THAT IT IS A BARRACUDA. FINALLY, YOU BRING THE VICIOUS SCOUNDREL OF THE SEA TO LAND. YOU STARE DOWN AT YOUR GASPING CATCH, SHIVER AT THE SIGHT OF ITS BARED RIPPER TEETH...



BEYOND, THE TURQUOISE ATLANTIC RESTS TRANQUILLY BETWEEN TIDES. SODD, HOOK BAITED, FEET BAKED, YOU TREAD FAR OUT OVER THE SAND AND CORAL BOTTOM BEFORE REACHING KNEE-DEEP WATER. YOU BEGIN TO SURF-CAST AND ALL IS PEACE AND QUIET EXCEPT FOR THE SOUND OF A FISH NEARBY, LEAPING FROM THE SEA...



YOU STAND, STARING, AS HE MOVES SOUNDLESSLY ACROSS THE SAND TO THE BROKEN HULK OF AN ANCIENT VESSEL THAT HAD BEEN TOSSED, HALF-HIDDEN, AMONG THE PALMS. AS YOU WONDER WHY YOU HADN'T NOTICED THE GRIZZLED WHIRL BEFORE, THE OLD MAN WAIVERS INTO IT THROUGH A CRUDE SCOWWAY CUT INTO ITS ROTTING SIDE...



YOU PAKE AND LEAVE YOUR SHIRT-RED PARADISE, GRATIFIED, AT LEAST, THAT THE OLD MAN HADN'T SEEN YOU AND SUSPECTED YOU TO ENJOICE, BORING TALK. SUDDENLY, A LONG BLACK SHADOW FALLS ACROSS YOUR PATH. A THIN, PIPING VOICE BRINGS YOU UP SHORT...



YOU TURN NOW, BARNEY, FACING THE SPIZZLED OLD MAN. NUDE, EXCEPT FOR A TATTERED FILTHY PAIR OF BUCK PANTS THAT REEK OF DEAD FISH. HE PORTS A RUSTY, ASSED MUSKET AT YOUR CHEST...



YOU HEARD ME, MISTUH? I COME FUST TO THIS PROPERTY, SO IT'S *MAINE!* NOW *BYE!* FORE I BLAST YU CLEAN T' KINGDOM COME!

YOUR FRIGHT OF THIS SPIZZLED OLD MAN WITH THE ANCIENT WEAPON OWES WAY TO ANGER AT HAVING BEEN CHEATED OF YOUR LONGED-FOR SOLITUDE...



I WAS GOING, YOU DIRTY OLD COOT... BUT NOW I GOT A MIND TO STAY!

HEY STAYH, MISTUH, AH' I'LL BE GUTTIN' YU UP FER SHARK BAIT!

THERE'S A COLD GLINT IN HIS ICE-BLUE EYES, AND HIS SUN-BRONZED CROSS-HATCHED BEIN GRABS TAIT ACROSS HIS JAWS. YOU RELENT IN THE FACE OF THE WEAPON IN THE OLD MAN'S TIGHTENED GRIP AND YOU MOVE OFF ANGRILY THROUGH THE PINES...



BOILING WITH RESENTMENT, YOU STOW YOUR GEAR INTO YOUR CAR, THEN YOU SAID BACK TOWARDS THE BEACH, UNWILLING TO BOW TO THE OLD ONE'S ILL WILL...



HE *BE OFFED* ME WHAT, BUT I'M *NOT LEAVING!*

I'LL SHOW THAT OLD GRAB. I'LL BURN 'EM OUT. I'LL SET FIRE TO THAT FILTHY WRECK HE LIVES IN AND I'LL BURN HIM OUT FOR GOOD!



SLOWLY, SILENTLY, STEALTHILY YOU MAKE YOUR WAY BACK TO THE BARNACLE AND SALT-ENCRUSTED WOODEN CARCASS OF HALFA ONCE-PROUD VESSEL. YOU'RE FILLED WITH VENGEFULNESS AND CURIOSITY. YOU STOP OUTSIDE THE ROTTED DOOR. A METALLIC SLEAM CATCHES YOUR EYE...



WHAT... WHAT'S *TRAPP* ON THE SAND! LOOKS LIKE A... A...

YOU PICK UP THE GLITTERING OBJECT. YOU STUDY IT, TURNING IT OVER IN YOUR HANDS...



IT *BE!* IT'S A GOLD COIN! REAL GOLD!

YOUR FIRST REACTION IS TO GET AWAY WITH YOUR PRIZE. YOU HURRY, STUMBLING, TO YOUR CAR...THE ANCIENT GOLD COACH-ON SLUTTERED TIGHTLY IN YOUR SWEATY PALM. YOU DRIVE HASTILY OFF THE LONELY HEL SPEEDING NORTHWARD ACROSS THE OVERSEAS HIGHWAY BRIDGES...



MAYBE THIS COIN'S BEEN THERE ALL THE TIME AND THE OLD GOOT NEVER...NOTICED...IT...

YOU EASE UPON THE GAS, YOU STOP RUNNING. YOU THINK SOME MORE AS YOU DRIVE SLOWLY NORTHWARD. SOON, YOU REACH ANOTHER KEY, ROLL UP TO AN EATERY THERE, AND WALK TOWARDS IT...



WHAT IF THE LUNATIC IS SITTING ON A FORTUNE IN GOLD? WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO HIM? HE'S TOO OLD TO ENJOY IT!

SO, BARNEY HORN, GREED AND DETERMINATION ETCH THEMSELVES INTO YOUR FACE AS YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION...



I'M GOING BACK THERE...TOMORROW! AND IF HE'S GOT MORE GOLD, I'M GOING TO GET IT!

WHAT'LL IT BE, MISTERY?

ISN'T THAT RIDICULOUS, BARNEY? THINK AGAIN. THAT'S IT! NOW YOU'VE GOT IT...



...OR MAYBE...MAYBE HE'S GOT MORE HIDDEN IN THAT WOOD? A FORTUNE IN GOLD...MAYBE...

YOU SIT AT A FLY-FLECKED COUNTER, STARING AT THE MENU, HARDLY SEEING IT.



AND WHO'D BELIEVE HIM IF HE BABBLES TO THE LAM ABOUT HIS GOLD BEING MISSING? FOR THAT MATTER, WHO'D MISS THE OLD MAN?

YES, SIR?

YOU ARRIVE BACK AT "THE OLD MAN'S KEY" ALONG WITH THE NIGHT. PASS AS YOU DID THAT MORNING AMONG THE PALMETTOS, AND, TAKING A JACKKNIFE, YOU SUIT YOUR CAR.



QUIET WHISPERING IN THE PINES ACCOMPANY YOUR SLOW APPROACH TO THE BEACH. THE ELEGANT CHIRP OF COCASUS SURROUND YOU, WITHIN, YOU FEEL THE RAPID THUMPING OF YOUR HEART. A RISING GIBBONS MOON LIGHTS YOUR WAY TO THE BAD BULK AMONG THE PALMS OR THE BEACH.



NOW YOU ARE THERE, BARNEY, YOUR HEAVY BREATHING BLENDING WITH THE BREEZE BLOWN PALMPHONDS THAT SOUND SO MUCH LIKE A SUMMER SHOWER, AND WITH THE GENTLE LAPPING OF THE SURF UPON THE NEARBY SHORE. A SOFT ORANGE LIGHT GLEAMS THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR. YOU PEER IN...

YOU SEE HIM IN THE FLICKERING CANOLE SLOW, HIS HAD EYES GLEANING AS HE LETS A TRICKLE OF GOLD COINS FALL THROUGH HIS GRABLED FINGERS INTO A WOODEN BOX ON THE ROUGH TABLE AT WHICH HE SITS. THE FAINT CHIME OF CLINKING METAL INVITES YOU IN...

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, BARNEY SLAM OPEN THE DOOR! THAT'S IT! SCARED ALMOST OUT OF HIS WITS, THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS TREASURE INTO A DIRTY WRINKLED CLOTH AND BALLS IT UP IN HIS TREMBLING HANDS.



YOU STEP TOWARD HIM. THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS RAG-WRAPPED TREASURE OF COOGLDONS TO THE FLOOR, THEN, BENDING AS THOUGH TO RETRIEVE THEM, HE COMES UP AGAIN, THE RUSTED OLD MUSKET IN HIS BONY FANGS... POINTED AT YOUR HEAD.

THE OLD MAN CHORTLES, PULLS BACK HIS FOREFINGER, SQUEEZING THE MUSKET'S TRIGGER, BUT NOTHING HAPPENS. NO BLAST. NO SHOT. NOTHING. THE BOLT, FROZEN BY YEARS OF RUST, DOESN'T MOVE. A COLD TWISTED GRIN WREATHES YOUR BREATH—STAINED FACE AS HE RAVES ON.



YOU LEAP AT HIM, BRINGING THE IRON JACKHAMMER DOWN ON HIS SKULL, FEELING THE CRUSHING OF BONE.

YOU PICK UP THE BUNDLE AND EMPTY THE COINS INTO THE MISER'S BOX... THROWING THE RAG AWAY.



AGAIN AND AGAIN YOU STRIKE, UNTIL HE SINKS LIFELESS TO THE FLOOR, THEN ONE MORE TERRIBLE BLOW AS HE LIES THERE, JUST TO MAKE SURE, AND HIS BRAINS SCATTER ABOUT THE WORK-WEARIED BOARD.

YOU SCRAMBLE ABOUT THE BRINE-FOULED WRECK. ANGRY. ANGRILY SEARCHING...

THERE *MUST* BE MORE!
THERE'S *GOT* TO BE MORE!



BUT YOU'VE GOT IT ALL, BARNEY, AND KNOWING THAT, YOU SAS TO THE FLOOR, SICK AND TIRED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. BUT THE OLD MAN'S PIECE OF DIRTY CLOTH CATCHES YOUR EYE...



DOTTED LINE... MARKED "100 YARDS"... TO A BIG "X"... FROM A LINE MARKED "LOW TIDE"... AND AN ARROW MARKED "H"? BY GOD! IT'S A MAP!

WELL, I'LL BE... IT'S A TREASURE MAP THE OLD MAN MADE. IT *MUST* BE WHERE THE OTHER HALF OF THE SHIP IS. THAT'S WHAT IT MUST BE! YEAN? SURE? A PIRATE SHIP, SUNKEN IN TWO BY A HURRICANE? HALF SUNK? HALF WASHED ASHORE... THIS HALF!



THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE WAS COMIN' OUT OF THE WATER. HE WAS BRINGING BACK THESE *GOINGS* FROM THE SUNK HALF OF THE WRECK! IT'S *OUT THERE*!



SLOWER, BARNEY. SLOWER NOW. THINK IT OUT. YOU'RE ON TO SOMETHING. JUST THINK IT OUT *CAREFULLY*. SLOW OUT THE OLD MAN'S LANTERN. THAT'S IT! NOW GO OUTSIDE. LOOK OUT THERE... AT THE SEA...

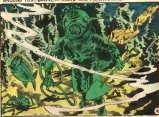
I'M NOT MUCH OF AN UNDERWATER SWIMMER! BUT I MAY BE ABLE TO RENT A DIVING SUIT SOMEWHERE! YEAN? I'LL DRIVE TO KEY WEST...



SO YOU DRIVE ALL NIGHT, BARNEY, AND YOU'RE IN KEY WEST WHEN DAWN LIGHTS THE SKY. BY LATE AFTERNOON, YOU'RE BACK AT THE "OLD MAN'S KEY" WITH A DIVING SUIT, ENOUGH ROPE TO GO OUT 50 YARDS, A GASOLINE-DRIVEN COMPRESSOR, THE WORKS. BREATHING WITH EXCITEMENT, YOU TAKE A SPACE AND START FACING OUT INTO THE SURF...



DEEPER AND DEEPER YOU GO... OUT UNDER THE ROLLING BREAKERS. OUT INTO THE SEA. AND THE SEA IS ALIVE AROUND YOU, BARNEY... ALIVE AND FRIGHTENING...



YOU GO OUT PAST THE MAP'S 50 YARDS AND THE SEA AROUND YOU IS FULL OF WONDERFUL BARNY, BUT NO BROKEN PIRATE HULL, NO SUBMERGED HALF-HULK DO YOU SEE...

I MUST'VE BEEN *CRAZY* TO TAKE THAT OLD COOT'S MAP SERIOUSLY!



AND THEN YOU SEE IT, RISING LIKE A SHADOW AHEAD OF YOU. THE MARKER.

THAT'S IT? THAT'S IT? THERE AIN'T NO COAT, HE'S HAD THE TREASURE, HE WAS BRINGIN' IT OUT! HE WAS BRINGIN' IT IN HERE. BURYIN' IT!



THERE, SIX FATHOMS DOWN, BEFORE THE ALGAE AND MOSS-ENCRUSTED MARKER, YOU BEGIN TO DIG. YOU DIG DOWN AND YOU DIG OUT... AN OLD, EMPTY HOLE WITH MOORS, NO CHEST, NOTHING. YOU CLIMB OUT, BITE WITH FRUSTRATION...

MAYBE THE MARKER SHOWS WHICH SIDE TO DIG ON. I'LL JUST SCRAPE OFF THE SLIME...



WITH YOUR SPADE, YOU SCRAPE OFF THE GREEN ALGAE AND MOSS AND SLIME. AND YOU TURN COLD, STABBING BACK IN A FRENZY AT WHAT YOU SEE...



NO! NO! GOOD LORD!

YOUR AIRLINE FOULS AROUND THE MARKER, STOPPING YOU FROM RUNNING. TERRORIZED, YOU TAKE AT THE RUBBER TUBE. THE MARKER TILTS FORWARD, SLOWLY... FALLING... AS IF IN SLOW MOTION.



...PINNING YOU DOWN INTO THE HOLE YOU'VE DUG... PINNING YOU DOWN INTO YOUR GRAVE. FOR YOU KNOW THAT BEFORE LONG, THE GAS IN THE COMPRESSOR OUT ON THE SHORE WILL RUN OUT AND THE AIR WILL BE GONE AND YOU'LL SUFFOCATE. THE OLD MAN, THE *CRAZY* OLD MAN! HE WAS *RIGHT*! HE *DID* KNOW! HE *WAS* PREPARED! THE LETTERS CUT INTO THE MARKER LAUGH AT YOU.



WELL, HEAT LIKE THEY SAY, KIDNIES? BARNY *DUG* HIS HOLE... NOW HE'S DYING IN IT. HE THIRSTED AFTER GOLD AND SETTLED FOR A BELLYFUL OF SALT WATER. WELL, THAT'S MY TREASURE-TERROR-TALE FOR THIS ISSUE OF *DR. X*'S MORBID MAG.

NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO HIM FOR A TALK ABOUT A *BLONDE* FLIRT WHO FINALLY MADE SOME *DESSERT*. *QUICKEN*! *WOO!* I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, THE *HAULT OF HORROR*! 'BYE, NOW!





GUNMAN



With the cardboard carton propped against the wall, Ed Grant pressed the door buzzer: chimes rang inside the apartment and footsteps scurried toward him. The safety latch scraped open, the door swung wide and Ed Grant stepped into the apartment, pushing the carton in front of him. "What . . . what's *ablu*?" the woman asked in surprise, pointing to the carton.

"Delivery," Ed Grant answer, locking the door shut with his heel. He slipped the latch into place and dumped the carton on the floor. "B-But I didn't order any . . ." the woman protested. Then she saw the gun Ed Grant held. "You . . . a . . ."

"A guy working his way through college," Ed Grant said flatly. "Don't make me thank you on this one, lady. . . I want all the cash and jewelry you got here!"

Grant heard a high-pitched voice coming along the corridor from one of the bedrooms, and he turned warily. A cow-headed five-year-old careened into the room, deeply involved in banking an imaginary aircraft he was piloting. He stopped in his tracks, his mouth gaping. "Hey!" he whinnied. "Who's this, mom?"

"L-Look, mister," the woman pleaded. "We don't have much money, see? My husband's only a lab assistant at the chemical plant on River Street. He just got outa school himself, and . . ."

"Can it!" Ed Grant snapped. "C'mon . . . the CASH! Where's it at?"

The kid, who had sauntered over to the foyer table, suddenly pulled a cap pistol from a toy holster slung over the chair and whirled toward Ed Grant. His finger squeezed the trigger and his high-pitched voice exploded in a series of raucous gumbor sounds. Ed Grant started at the sound, then began to laugh deep in his throat. "The kid's a lil' whacky, ain't

he?" he snickered. Then, nudging her toward the kitchen with his gun, he added, "Let's find *char dough*, *sister*!"

While the woman nervously pulled a purse from a kitchen drawer, the kid grabbed a tiny telephone buried in a toy box and yelped into the receiver. "Sheriff! Ambie over here pronounced Varmint's robbin' my mom!"

Ed Grant tilted his head far back, opened his mouth and roared with delight till tears came to his eyes. For several minutes he shook with uncontrolled mirth. Subsidizing slowly, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "The lil' nut," he chorled. "A real character, ain't he? Right outa television?"

The kid's face clouded and he ran from the room. A moment later, as Ed Grant peered into the purse he had grabbed, the boy returned. He held a small water pistol. Ed turned, started to guffaw again. "Jerko, here," he exploded. "A reg'lar half-pint hero, ain't he?"

The boy's face tightened . . . he squeezed the trigger and a stream of smoky fluid sprayed into Ed Grant's face. He dropped his gun and a shriek of horror poured from Ed Grant's scored lips. He staggered backwards, his eye-sockets raw cavities where the eyeballs had just been burnt out of his head. One trembling hand went to his face . . . passed over the ruined flesh, which, was curling away with a bubbling sound, revealing stark yellowish bones beneath. Ed Grant screeched in agony, his face already a ghastly oozing wound. He sagged to the floor.

The boy felt his mother's arm tagging him sharply, as she yanked the water pistol from him. "Just wait till I tell your daddy what you just did!" she snapped. "He told you a hundred times never to fill your gun with his *sulfuric acid*!"

NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!



YES, FANS...YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MELVIN, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE

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THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 106
215 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N. Y.

So here's my \$02! So I could've joined for half the price a couple of months back! So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me down and send me the stuff what the kids wearing and the bulletin I don't want but I'm paying for..

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____

* (\$02 BONUS CHECKS FOOT THE BAIL FOR THE BULLETIN, WFTF)
(JUST WE HAD TO RAISE THE PRICE! SO BEHOLD)

* (\$02 \$02 MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1964)

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heh, heh! Here comes our morbid mailman with the latest sack of corded stamped squares containing poetic correspondence from you creeps. So I'll just stick my honey paw into the "YEEHAWWWWW" Mmmmmmm! Very funny! Somebody sent a large coupon in a small envelope. A strange trick! Where was I? Oh, yes... so I'll just stick a pair of scissors into the old mail sack and print a few poems and stuff for your period.

Love Harvath of The Bronx, N. Y. joins the Poetical Parody to the tune of "I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover":

I'm turning you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before.
The first blade's for chopping.
The second will hack,
The third will dispatch
Your head from your neck.
No need explaining.
The one remaining
You won't hear anyone
I'm turning you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before.

From the creative clasp of John M. Gault who lives in a box in Waterville, Me comes this Steam Song Satire of the tune "Heart of my Heart":

Part of my heart,
I love that engine,
Part of my heart,
Bring back a vein to me.
When we were kids
On the corner of the street
We were rough and ready guys,
But, oh, how we could handle barres
Part of my heart,
Mount friends were faster than
Too bad we had to part
I know a tear would glaze
If once more I could hear
To that gang that are part of my belt

This next Lullabyer Lyric is the brainwork of Conrad J. Falk, of Chicago, Ill who pokes fun at the tune "Singing in the Rain" with these warped words.

I
I'm swinging in the rain,
Just swinging in the rain
What a ghastly old feeling,
My neck's stretched again
My eyes bulge with pain,
As I goggle this refrain
I'm swinging, swinging in the rain

II

The soap has been sprung,
My neck has been wrung,
My tongue is just dangling,
I know that I'm done
My face is all red,
I know that I'm dead,
I'm swinging, swinging in the rain

Clara Bealla Crossland of McKeesport, Pa. who claims to be a part in the strictly artistic sense of the word, submits this lovely little poemlet to pluck your heart strings:

My boyfriend is a charming thing
I love him 'cause he is so green
One side of his ugly face is gone,
The other hangs with rotting meat

Raymond Newman of Chicago, Ill. writes these poetic verses:

Oh, for the life of a vampire,
That's what I really crave
To prove the face of death at night,
And sleep each day in a grave

John Newkirk of Maparth, N. Y. desires his love and this poem:

Blood and Guts
All over the street,
And me without
A spoon to eat

Paul Block and Douglas Tushman (they had to collaborate on this epic, yes) of Elmhurst, N. Y. knock a famous nursery rhyme out:

Tickety Dicky Dack
The men were down the track

Well, enough wit. Now for a limeric.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I was walking down the street reading my heart EC, when all of a sudden there was a scratch, a scream, and a man lay on the road. He had been hit by a car. The car sped away. I ran over to see what I could do. The man lay there and said, 'I'm dying! Help me!' So I helped him. My sentence is going to be carried out next Monday.

Bob Wilson
Napara Falls, N. Y.

And now, in the space left, the commercially. A job reception to this mag will set you back \$7.00 for eight weeks' monthly envelope... and all this for the ad. dress for ad. orders, poetry, comments, and criticism is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 44
225 Lafayette Street
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

HERE'S A TERROR-TALE OF A
CHICK WHO FINALLY WORMED

The PROPOSAL



PEARL HAD ALWAYS LIVED LIFE IN THE BEST OF STYLE... WITH FINE CLOTHES, JEWELRY, A PARK AVENUE APARTMENT, AND A CHAMPAGNE CADILLAC. AND PEARL HAD ALWAYS MARRIED TO FIND RICH HUSBANDS WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO KEEP HER IN THE STYLE TO WHICH SHE'D BECOME ACCUSTOMED. LIKE FREDDY HOWELL, FOR INSTANCE. FREDDY HOWELL WAS PEARL'S LATEST RICH-HUSBAND-BANKRUPT. HE WAS, THAT IS, UNTIL HE ANNOUNCED...



NOW, FREDDY WAS GONE. PEARL HAD LOST ANOTHER BILL-PAYING HUSBAND, AND THE MORE SHE WAS AT THE PENTHOUSE DOOR, PEARL WAS DESPERATE. A DODGY, DESPERATE PLAN WAS FORMULATED IN HER PRETTY RED HEAD AND DISCARDED BEFORE SHE REMEMBERED THE QUIET, GENTLE, LONELY MAN ACROSS THE HALL...



SHE WHAPPED HER FLINTY BLACK NOCLISEE AROUND HER SHAPELY FIGURE AND STEPPED BOLDLY INTO THE HALL AS HOWARD ELLIS LOOKED HIS APARTMENT DOOR BEHIND HIM AND TURNED TO THE ELEVATOR...



PEARL LET HOWARD STARE. SHE LET HIS EYES TRAVEL OVER HER FULL YOUNG BODY JUST LONG ENOUGH. THEN, SHE PUT ON THE SHY EMBARRASSEDMENT ACT...

OH, I... I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, MR. ELLIS... WHY WERE YOU HERE? AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME! I'M PEARL, DRAKE! MISS PEARL, DRAKE!

ELLIS! HOWARD ELLIS! I... I... WELL, HERE'S THE ELEVATOR!

PEARL INMEDIATELY CURSED THE HIGH SPEED CONVEYANCE THAT HAD RUSHED UPWARD THROUGH THE STEEL THROAT OF THE BUILDING AND INTERRUPTED HER PROGRESS. SHE TURNED AND GLIDED BACK TO HER APARTMENT AS THE ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSED.

GOOD MORNING, MR. ELLIS... AND THANK YOU FOR THE FINE!

NOT AT ALL, MISS DRAKE...

SHE CLOSED THE DOOR, LEANED BACK DISTRACTEDLY AGAINST IT, AND FROWNED...

I WONDER IF I OVERPLEASD MY HAND WALKING OUT LIKE THIS? I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO THINK I'M A CHEAP FEMALE WOLF ON THE PROWL. HE LOOKS SO PROPER AND PROUD. I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE IF HE THOUGHT THAT!

THEN PEARL SMILED. SHE WALKED SLOWLY ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM, HER VOLUPTUOUS FIGURE SWAYING SENSUOUSLY...

BUT HE IS A MAN! HE'S GOT ALL OF THE INSTINCTS OF A MAN. I'LL BET HE CAN'T GET ME OFF HIS MIND!

SHE STOPPED AT THE DESK, HER MIND RACING... SCHEMING. PLANNING HER NEXT MOVE. SHE FINGERED THE DISPOSABLE NOTICE SHE'D RECEIVED IN THE MORNING MAIL...

THEY'VE GIVEN ME A WEEK TO FORK OVER THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS HERE OR OUT ON THE STREET I GO. AND I HAVEN'T GOT IT. I HAVEN'T GOT HALF THAT MUCH!

PEARL Pondered her problem another moment and then, with her lovely face assuming a determined air, she hurried into the bedroom TO DRESS...

MR. HOWARD ELLIS IS MY ONLY GUY I'VE GOT TO GET HIM. ONE WITH ON THE OTHER!

THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR STOD HER UP AND DOWN AND SMILED LASCIVIOUSLY WHEN SHE ASKED HIM THE INFORMATION SHE NEEDED. IT WAS OBVIOUS HE'D HEARD OF HER PLAN...

I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHAT MR. ELLIS DOES FOR A LIVING? WHAT FORM HE WORKS FOR?

WHY DON'T YOU FIND OUT WHAT I CAN DO, INSTEAD, HONEY?

PEARL KNEW WHEN TO ACT HAUGHTY AND INDIGNANT. UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR MIGHT HAVE AROUSED HER INTERESTS, BUT NOW...

WHY, YOU *FRESH*...

SHE STOOD PROUD AND TRIUMPHANT AS HE RUBBED HIS BEET-RED CHECK WHERE SHE'D SLAPPED IT. THEN, SHE SOLELY REPEATED...

I ASKED YOU IF YOU KNEW MR. ELLIS'S **STOCK BROKER BUSINESS?** NE... HE'S A **STOCK BROKER** I... THINK HE HAS HIS **OWN FIRM**

PEARL CROSSED THE LOBBY TO THE PHONE BOOTHS AND SCANNED THE CITY DIRECTORY...

ELLER... ELLER... ELLIS, MR. HERE IT IS! **HOWARD ELLIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC., STOCK BROKERS, INVESTMENT COUNSELORS, 231 WALL STREET...**

OUTSIDE THE LUXURIOUS APARTMENT, PEARL CONTEMPLATED HAILING A CAB, THEN CONSIDERED HER Waning FINANCES, AND WALKED UP THE SIDE STREET TO THE SUBWAY. SHE ROSE UNCOMFORTABLY IN THE CROWDED NOISY CARS, HER QUINTY NOSE TWITCHING SCORNFULLY AT THE SUFFOCATING SCENT OF THE NURANITY SURROUNDING HER. SHE TRIED TO LOSE HERSELF IN HER PLAN OF STRATEGY...

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM OUTSIDE THE BUILDING AT LUNCH HOUR. OF COURSE IT WILL BE AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING.

AT NOON, PEARL WAS AT THE ENTRANCE TO 231 WALL STREET, HER CAMPAIGN FOR THE CONQUEST OF THE UN-SUSPECTING MR. ELLIS CRYSTAL-CLEAR IN HER MIND...

I'LL CONVINCE HIM TO TAKE ME TO LUNCH AND HE'LL SEE I'N NO CHEAP DAME! HE'LL SEE I GOT HIGH-CLASS TASTE! HE'LL... OH-OH! HERE HE COMES... AND HERE I GO...

I SEE YOUR PARDON, MA'AM? I DIDN'T SEE... I'M SORRY! IT WAS ALL MY FAULT! I... WHY, IT'S MR. ELLIS!

MR. ELLIS! THIS IS A COINCIDENCE, RUNNING INTO YOU LIKE THIS. OH, BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME IN MY CLOTHES, DO YOU? I MEAN THESE CLOTHES, REMEMBER TWO MORNING? PEARL DRAKE? THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT ACROSS THE HALL? OH, BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER MISS DRAKE AND THE STOP-FRO WATCH!

BEFORE HOWARD COULD OBJECT, PEARL STEERED HIM TO A TAXI, TOOK HIS HAND, AND LED HIM INTO IT AFTER HER...

YOU DO REMEMBER WELL I OWE YOU SOMETHING FOR GOING SO KIND THIS MORNING, MR. ELLIS. I'M TAKING YOU TO LUNCH, THE PLAZA DRIVE!

THE PLAZA? BUT THAT'S WAY UPTOWN, MISS DART.



BY THE TIME THEY'D FLOWED UPTOWN THROUGH THE TRAFFIC AND ARRIVED AT THE BEAK PLAZA DINING ROOM, PEARL'S EFFULGENT DISPOSITION HAD WARNED THE BITY MILLIONAIRE...

RIGHT BOSSSE, HOWARD, AND THE ROAST PHEASANT UNDER GLASS SOUNDS DELICIOUS.

HAVE YOU GOT THAT, WAITER? I'LL HAVE A HALF SANDWICH ON WHOLE WHEAT TOAST AND A GLASS OF MILK.



THROUGH THE MEAL, PEARL CAREFULLY ENCOURAGED HOWARD. BY DESERT, HE WAS STRUGGLING TO SAY SOMETHING. BY FOLDS-CAFE, HE'D FINALLY SUMMONED UP THE COURAGE TO PUT HIS HAND ON HER'S AND BLURT...

PEARL...GULP...MAY I TAKE YOU TO DINNER AND A SHOW...TONIGHT?

OH, I'D ADORE THAT, HOWARD!



AND THAT NIGHT, AFTER THEIR DATE, THEY RETURNED TO THE PENTHOUSE FLOOR OF THE LUSH PARK AVENUE APARTMENT HOUSE. PEARL DROPPED HER COOR AND SPOKE TEMPTIBLY IN A SOFT HONEYED TONE...

WOULDN'T YOU COME IN FOR A NIGHTS... MEETING IN THE MORNING, DEAR?

THANK YOU, MS. PEARL. I HAVE A BOARD MEETING IN THE MORNING AND I MUST GET TO BED.



SO AFTER A BUCK*GOODNIGHT! PEARL FOUND HERSELF ALONE IN HER APARTMENT, FRUSTRATED AND ANNOYED...

E. I MUST BE LOSING MY TOUCH!



BUT HOWARD ELLIS PHONED PEARL THE NEXT DAY FROM HIS OFFICE AND HER CONFIDENCE IN HER EVENTUAL SUCCESS WAS RESTORED...

WELL, PEARL? WHAT SHALL IT BE TONIGHT?

IT'S SUCH A LOVELY NIGHT, HOWE, I'D RATHER NOT BE INDOORS. LET'S TAKE A HARBOR THROUGH THE PARK!



PEARL KNEW WHERE TO FIND ATMOSPHERE CONGENIAL TO ROMANCE. THE RIDE THROUGH THE PARK IN THE HARBOR CAB WAS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR HAD ORDERED. SOON, HOWARD WAS HOLDING HER HAND AND WHISPERING SOFTLY...

IT IS A LOVELY NIGHT, PEARL... BUT NOT NEARLY AS LOVELY AS YOU ARE!

WHY, HOWARD...



PEARL WAS AN OLD HAND AT THIS GAME OF TRAPPING A MAN. SHE KNEW HOW TO PRESS HER ADVANTAGE... HOW TO MOVE HER SOFT FULL-LIPS CLOSE TO HIS INVITING...

OH, PEARL...

AND SHE KNEW HOW TO ACT SHY AND COY AND SURPRISED WHEN HE'D FINALLY FALLEN INTO HER LITTLE TRAP...

I-I'M SORRY, I-I-I DON'T MEAN, HOWE! HAVE DONE THAT... I-I-I'M VERY FOND OF YOU!

SOON THEY WERE BACK OUTSIDE HER APARTMENT. PEARL LEANED AGAINST HER DOOR, FINGERING HOWARD'S COAT LAPEL AND GENTLY, GENTLY DRAGGING HIM AGAINST HER SUFIERERS BODY... WHISPERING...

KISS ME AGAIN, HOWE... PEARL...

SHE KISSED HIM WITH MOIST RAVISHING HUNGRY LIPS. SHE KISSED HIM AS SHE KNEW HE'D NEVER BEEN KISSED BEFORE. AND THEN SHE LEFT HIM STANDING THERE... LIMP... TREMBLING... GASPING FOR BREATH. SHE LOCKED THE DOOR BETWEEN THEM AND STOOD IN THE DARKNESS OF HER APARTMENT, GRINNING WITH SATISFACTION...

ONCE MORE LIKE THAT AND HE'LL BE BEDDING AND IT'S BETTER BE SOON! I'VE ONLY GOT A FEW DAYS LEFT BEFORE I GET KICKED OUT!

IT WAS WARM THE NEXT EVENING, THERE WAS NO MOON AND THE SNOW HUNG DAM OVERHEAD. PEARL COULD GRAB THE DEEP TENSION IN HOWARD AS THEY WALKED HOME. SHE WAITED PATIENTLY. FINALLY, HE STOPPED BENEATH A LAMP POST AND HE GAVE A NEW EASER DETERMINED LOOK IN HIS EYES...

PEARL! I-I-I NEED YOU! I WANT YOU!

OH, HOWARD! IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW MUCH I NEED YOU!

SHE WATCHED THIS WEALTHY MILVETUAST PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER MANFULLY. SHE LISTENED, SHOCKED, TO THE WORDS HE CAREFULLY ENOUNCED IN A FIRM, ALMOST FORMAL MANNER...

PEARL, I WANT YOU FOR MY WIFE!

WHAT?!

THIS WAS BEYOND PEARL'S WILDEST DREAMS. HAD SHE HEARD RIGHT? WAS THIS A PROPOSAL? NOW IT WAS PEARL WHO WAS NERVOUS. THIS CHARACTER WAS PLAYING FOR KEEPS. NOT FOR A MONTH, A YEAR, FOREVER. SHE HAD TO ASK HIM AGAIN...

HOWARD, ARE YOU SURE? YOU DON'T KNOW ME!

I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO WANT YOU FOR MY WIFE, PEARL!

PEARL WAS ECSTATIC, SHE GLOWED IN HER UNHOPED-FOR TRIUMPH, AND WHEN HE ASKED...

WILL YOU COME UP
TO MY APARTMENT,
PEARL?
OH, YES,
HOW? YES...



THEY WENT UP... HE, HOLDING HER HAND IN A TIGHT FEVERISH GRIP, HIS BREATHING QUICKENED WITH EXCITEMENT... AND SHE, FOLLOWING EAGERLY, ANXIOUS TO CONVINCE HIM OF HIS WISE CHOICE, ANXIOUS TO THANK HIM...



IS HERE... THE BEDROOM... YES, HOWIE...

HE OPENED THE BEDROOM DOOR AND SHOVED PEARL IN. SHE HEARD THE LOCK CLICK BEHIND HIM... HEARD HIS LOW THROATED SMILE. SHE PEERED INTO THE BLOOM...



ESTHER? I
BROUGHT ANOTHER
ONE...
ESTHER??
WHO'S SHE?

AND THEN PEARL SAW THE COFFIN IN THE BLOOM - THE OLD COFFIN WITH THE LID SQUEAKING OPEN... THE PALE WHITE FIGURE RISING FROM ITS... BITS OF EARTH GROPING FROM ITS FLOWING BLACK CAPE... THE RAZOR-SHARP SNAKE-LIKE HANDS... THE BEZING SPITTLE...



MY GOD! WHAT IS IT,
HOWIE? WHAT IS IT?
THIS IS MY WIFE,
PEARL! SHE'S A
VAMPIRE!

HOWARD PUSHED PEARL TOWARDS THE PROTHING, GRAYING, HIDEOUS CREATURE...



I TOLD YOU I WANTED
YOU FOR MY WIFE!
NO! NO!
OH, LORD!

AND HOWARD SAT DOWN AND WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS HIS LIVING-DEAD WIFE SPREAD UPON THIS LATEST DESERVING VICTIM HE'D BROUGHT. HE LISTENED EAGERLY TO HER SLUTTISH SLURPING NOISES. HE NODDED APPROVINGLY AS THE PINK GLOW CAME BACK INTO HER SUNKEN CHEEKS, AND PEARL'S WRITHING BODY BECAME PALER AND PALER AND PALER.



SO POOR PEARL FINALLY FOUND HER LAST HUSBAND - SORCERY! ONLY IN THIS CASE, IT WAS THE HUSBAND'S WIFE WHO WAS THE SORCERER... BLOOD-SORCERER! THAT IS! HER, HOW? WELL, THE OLD WITCH MIXES WITH ANOTHER OF HER CREEPY GARGLEDON-CONCOCTIONS SO ALL STEP ASIDE WHILE SHE SLURPS SLIME AT YOU. BY THE WAY, I HEAR SOME PEOPLE FINALLY JOINED THE



E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB. THAT'S GOOD NEWS! I WAS BEGINNING TO BE AFRAID THE MEMBERSHIP WAS GOING TO BE LIMITED TO ER... THINGS. SHALL WE SAY? BEEP NOW, PEOPLE TOO? WELL, WHAT'D YA KNOW? 'BYE!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HIE, HIE! COME IN, CREEPS. YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR RETCHING... THE HAUNT OF FEAR. AND, *WHY DIE?*... THAT'S *FRENCH, FRIEND!*... HAVE I GOT A REVOLTING TALE FOR YOU. WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S COOKING IN MY GROSSST CAST-IRON CAULDRON? WELL, YOUR OLD WITCH HAS A SOFT BLAS OF BRISBY GAS ABOUT A TERROR TIME AND A FAST OPERATOR WHO BROUGHT A MESSY MATTER TO A HEAD AND CUT IT OFF THERE! SO Wipe the DRUGG FROM YOUR CHINS, SEND YOUR FLOPPY EARS THIS WAY, AND LISTEN TO THIS DELIGHTFUL TALE OF BUTCHERY CALLED...

The Sliceman Cometh

THAT 10TH OF MARCH, 1756, WAS GRIM AND GREY WITH RAIN THREATENING IN THE DIMINOUS BLACK CLOUDS THAT BILLOWED OVERHEAD. A RAIN WIND HOWLED FURIOUSLY ABOUT THE CRIMSON-STAINED GUILLOTINE, BUT IT COULD NOT CLEAR THE REPULED AIR OF ITS ABATOR AROMA. UNDERFOOTDOOR- STONES WERE SLIPPERY WITH CONGEALING SORE, WHILE FRESH WARM BLOOD BUMBLED IN A CONSTANT FLOW DOWN THE BUTTERS AS THE GREAT BLADE HISSED DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN, HEAPING THE BASKET WITH WIDE-EYED NOBLE HEADS THERE. CALMLY, STOOD THE MAN OF THE HOUR, THE EXECUTIONER, *ANDRÉ MACHE*, AND THE JEERING, HOOTING, RED-BONNETED CITIZENRY, READING AN URGENT MESSAGE JUST HANDED TO HIM.

"AND IF A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS INTEREST YOU, THEN VISIT ME AT 48 RUE ORNOU." HMM? *PIERRE*, I MUST LEAVE! CARRY ON FOR ME, JOE!

A PLEASURE, *ANDRÉ*.

AS *ANDRÉ* HURRIED AWAY FROM THE ANFUL SCENE, HIS BLOOD-SEALED SHOES LEAVING RED IMPRINTS ON THE PAVING STONES—HE EAGERLY RE-READ THE NOTE HE'D RECEIVED.

A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS? SACRE BLEU!



SOON, THE EXECUTIONER WAS BOWLED
OVER INTO A SPACIOUS ROOM OF
AS PUE CUBBY BY A VERNAL-LOOKING
MAN WITH AN UNCTUOUS GRIN
ABOUT HIM. . .

AN, M'SIEU VACHE! I AM JEAN
CORBEAU. IT IS A GREAT
HONOR INDEED TO HAVE SO
IMPORTANT AND DISTINGUISHED
A VISITOR AS YOU IN MY HOME. . .

YOU MENTIONED
SOMETHING ABOUT
ONE THOUSAND
GOLD LOUIS.

CITIZEN
CORBEAU THAT
IS WHY I AM
HERE.

MAKE YOUR-
SELF COM-
FORTABLE.
WELCOME HERE...
SOME OF THE
FINEST WINE
FROM MY CELLAR
AND NOW. . . I
WILL EXPLAIN
WHY I SENT FOR
YOU. . .

ACTUALLY, THIS HOUSE IS NOT
MINE. IT BELONGS TO MY BROTHER
CLAUDE. BEING THE ELDEST, MY
FATHER LEFT HIM EVERYTHING...
A FORTUNE W'EDU. SHOULD ANY-
THING HAPPEN TO CLAUDE, I'D
GET IT ALL. YOU UNDERSTAND?



YOU WANT ME TO RIDE
YOU OF YOUR BROTHER,
CITIZEN CORBEAU?
BARRIST! YOU INSULT ME!
I WOULD MURDER A MAN...
EVEN FOR THAT MUCH
BOLD?

NOT MURDER. WOMAN!
MERELY AN ACCUSATION
TO THE RIGHT PARTIES...
AND THE HEAD OF
ANOTHER ROYALIST
SYMPATHIZER WOULD
ROLL INTO YOUR BASKET.

ALTHAT IS A DIFFERENT STORY.
M'SIEU CORBEAU, IF YOUR BROTHER
IS ONE OF THEM... A ROYALIST...
THEN I WILL BE GLAD TO EXPOSE
HIM. IT WOULD BE MY DUTY!

YOU ARE A WISE
MAN, M'SIEU VACHE.
DO NOT THINK I AM
NOT FOND OF MY
BROTHER. BUT THERE
ARE TWO THINGS I
LOVE MORE: FRANCE
AND MONEY!



HERE IS HALF THE PAYMENT...
500 GOLD LOUIS. YOU WILL
RECEIVE THE REST WHEN I HAVE
PROOF THAT MY BROTHER HAS
BEEN EXECUTED? SO MANY
HEADS FALL THESE DAYS...

YOU SHALL HAVE
UNDENIABLE
EVIDENCE,
CITIZEN CORBEAU.
I WILL SEE TO
IT! AND NOW, NOW
GO. . .

AND SO, THAT VERY DAY, ANDRE VACHE MADE HIS ACCU-
SATION. . .

I HAVE IT FROM HIS OWN BROTHER'S LIPS.
CITIZEN MAMOT! CLAUDE CORBEAU IS IN
FULL SYMPATHY WITH THE NOBILITY,
DESPISES THE NEWLY-FORMED
REPUBLIC AND WOULD BETRAY IT
AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY. . .

ORDER
THE
ARREST
OF CLAUDE
CORBEAU.



THE NEXT DAY, CITIZEN MARAT AND SIX OTHER JUDGES OF THE COMMUNE LOOKED DOWN COLDLY AND IMPASSIVELY AT THE ACCUSED...



I AM NOT AN ENEMY OF THE REVOLUTION. WHEN AN INNOCENT MAN CAN BE DRAGGED FROM HIS HOME ON THE FINEST OF PRETEXTS ACCUSED OF TREASON WITHOUT A SHRED OF EVIDENCE, AND SENT TO THE GUILLOTINE BY SUCH A LAW... THEN THIS IS NOT A TRIAL, BUT WANTON BUTCHERY!

CITIZEN MARAT HELD UP HIS HAND AND A HUSH FELL OVER THE CHAMBER. THEN, SCOWLING DARKLY AT THE ACCUSED, HE WHISPERED...



THIS IS YOUR DEFENSE, MRS. COUSBEAU... THAT WE ARE BUTCHERS BECAUSE WE DESTROY OUR ENEMIES?

HE LOOKED AT HIS FELLOW JUDGES...



WHAT SAY YOU, CITIZENS? WE HAVE THE WORD OF THE EMINENT EXECUTIONER, ANDRÉ VACHE, CITIZEN MARAT! THAT IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR US!

ANDRÉ VACHE LED CLAUDE TO THE MONSTRIOUS MACHINE AS WHITING NEEDLES CLICKED AND THE THROAT JERRED...



SOMEHOW, YOU LYING DOG, JUSTICE WILL BE DONE!

YOU DELAY THE PERFORMANCE, W'SIEU. MADAM LA BULLETIME MUST NOT BE KEPT WAITING!

THE CHAMBER, THROGGED WITH ANGRY RAISED CITIZENS, SHOOK WITH THE HORROR CLAMORING FOR STILL ANOTHER HEAD...



HE EVEN SPEAKS LIKE THE NOBILITY!

DEATH! DEATH!

CITIZEN MARAT BARRD HIS HAND AND DROPPED A SQUARE OF BLACK CLOTH. AND WITH THIS SYMBOLIC GESTURE, THE CROWD ROARED ITS APPROVAL...



THE PERDONT, CLAUDE COUSBEAU, IS DEATH ON THE GUILLOTINE!

THE RED-BONNETED CROWD WAITED IN TENSE SILENCE AS THE HEAVY KNIFE WAS HOISTED HIGH BETWEEN THE SLOTTED PARALLEL BEAMS. THEN, WITH A WHINING CRESCENDO TO ACCOMPANY THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE'S DESCENT, THE CROWD EXPLODED IN A LUSTY CHEER AS IT HIT... CUTTING THROUGH FLESH AND BONE, SLAMMING INTO THE BLOCK...



ANDRÉ CAUGHT CLAUDE'S HEAD IN A GRASP AS HOT BLOOD SPURTED FROM THE SEVERED VEINS AND ARTERIES OF THE DECAPITATED BODY, SPRAYING HIS FACE AND CLOTHES. HE HELD UP THE HEAD-HEAVY BAG WITH A TRIUMPHANT GRIN. THE CROWD SCREAMED...

HE MOVED THROUGH THE SILENT DESERTED STREETS, HEARING THE CHEERS FROM THE BULLDOZING SQUARE AND THINKING ONLY OF THE GOLD HE HAD EARNED. BEFORE LONG, HE ARRIVED AT 49 RUE DU BOIS...

ANDRÉ VACHE REACHED INTO THE BAG, PULLED FORTH ITS CONTENTS, AND HELD IT DAZZLING BY THE FAIR



JEAN COURBEAU TURNED SICKLY GREEN. HE WHISPERED SOFTLY...

ANDRÉ WENT LIGHT-HEARTEDLY THROUGH THE EVENING STREETS, THE GOLD JINGLING IN HIS POCKETS, THE BAG SWINGING MERRILY AT HIS SIDE. A COACH RUMBLLED BY, AND HE PLAYFULLY TOSSED THE RED-SOAKED BAG THROUGH ITS WINDOW...



THE COACH STOPPED. A TALL MAN GOT OUT AND CARRIED THE GOATY RUMBLE BACK TO ANDRÉ...

THE MAN HURDED ANDRÉ THE BAG...

THE COACH RUMBLLED OFF AND ANDRÉ WALKED ON, DETERMINED TO RID HIMSELF OF THE HEAD. AS HE CROSSED ONE OF THE SEINE BRIDGES, HE TOSSED IT OVER THE PARAPET...



ANDRE DID NOT SEE THE SACK LAND IN THE BOTTOM OF A BOAT THAT CAME FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE AND THE HEAD ROLLED OUT AND THE FISHERMEN GASPED.



HOW DO YOU WANT THAT KIND OF FRENCH JOKE IS THIS?

LOOK! IT IS VAGNE, THE EXECUTIONER!

I WAS IN THE SQUARE WHEN HE GOT THIS HEAD TODAY, HEARD HE HELD IT UP FOR ALL TO SEE. HE WAS VERY PROUD OF IT! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL!



THEN HE DROPPED IT ACCIDENTALLY! COME, EDWARD, WE WILL PUT OURSELVES IN GOOD WITH HIM BY RETURNING IT!

WHEN ANDRE RETURNED TO HIS ROOMING HOUSE, HE WAS GREETED BY HIS LANDLADY, MADAME BARRETTE...



TWO CITIZENS LEFT JUNE FOR YOU, MRSU VAGNE!

NO! NO! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

ANDRE HURRIED OUT INTO THE STREET WITH THE BLOOD-SOAKED BAG. HE STOPPED OVER A SEWER-GRATE...



SP, ANNA CLAUDE COURBEAU! SO THEY PLAY GAMES WITH US! WELL, PERHAPS THE RATS DOWN THERE WILL FIND YOU TEMPTING...

THE HEAD DROPPED TO ANDRE'S FEET AS IT TORE THROUGH THE SACK'S BLOOD-ROTTED BOTTOM. THE CLOTH DISAPPEARED INTO THE GARB-REeking DARKNESS. ANDRE HESITATED, STUPIDLY, AS AN OGRE, HEADED WITH HEADLESS CORPSES, ROUNDED THE CORNER...



VAGNE! IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOUR LOOKING-GORGES SOME OF YOUR CUSTOMERS?

TAKE THEM AWAY, BOSS! GO BURY THEM!

ANDRE STOOD OVER THE GRIMMING HEAD, HIDING IT FROM THE CART-DRIVER'S VIEW...



I'M IN NO HURRY VAGNE. LET US STOP FOR A GRIM! OUR HEADLESS FRIENDS CAN WAIT!

LET ME ALONE, BOSS! GO BURY YOUR FOUL-SMELLING DEAD!

BOSS SHRUGGED AND THE CART RUMBLING OFF. ANDRE TURNED TO THE HEAD, ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED. HE REACHED FOR IT SAVAGELY...



TORMENT ME, WILL YOU, CLAUDE COURBEAU! WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

THE EXECUTIONER CAME UPON A MARKET OPEN LATE AND LIT DIMLY BY OIL LAMPS. HE PASSED THE STALLS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND SMILED AT THE JOKE HE MADE...



FREE AT LAST OF HIS PAINFUL BURDEN, ANDRE CELEBRATED HIS NEW-FOUND FORTUNE AT AN INN WITH A GLASS OF BRANDY THEN HE RETURNED HOME AND, MEETING HIS LANDLADY, GOOD-NATUREDLY RELIEVED HER OF HER SHOPPING BASKET...



THEY ENTERED THE ROOMING HOUSE TOGETHER AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN.



CLAUDE COURBEN'S HEAD GRINNED UP AT ANDRE FROM AMONG THE VEGETABLES MADAM BARRETTE EMPTIED OUT ONTO THE KITCHEN TABLE...



THE LANDLADY MOANED AND TURNED AWAY, SIDE ANDRE, SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY, FLUNG OPEN THE SHUTTERS AND THREW THE BARGOYLE-LIKE SCULL INTO THE DARK STREET BELOW...



A MOMENT LATER, MONSIEUR ETIENNE, ANOTHER BOMBER, ENTERED... ON HIS DOUR FACE, A LOOK MORE OF PATHOS THAN ANGER... IN HIS HAND, THE HEAD...



ANDRE PUNED, THE BLOOD DRAINING FROM HIS FACE. HE SEIZED A CLEAVER FROM THE TABLE, THEN TURNED AND SWATHED THE HEAD FROM MONSIEUR ETIENNE.



ANDRÉ STUMBLED TO HIS ROOM AND WITH A RAGE THAT VERGED ON MADNESS, HE KNOCKED ON THE FLOOR AND KICKED AT THE LIFELESS FLUSH AND BOHE UNTIL HE'D REDUCED IT INTO AN UNRECOGNIZABLE HEAP OF WRECK—WRECK!



NOW, LET'S SEE YOU COME BACK! NOW! NOW!

THEN, WEAK AND EXHAUSTED, HIS INTERIORS ROLLING AND GULVERING LIKE JELLY, THE EXECUTIONER SANK ON HIS BED IN A COMA-LIKE STUPOR.



SOS... SOS...

AN HOUR PASSED. PARIS WAS ASLEEP. THE NIGHT WAS STILL EXCEPT FOR AN EX-CANT THAT RUMBLLED BY BELOW. ANDRÉ STIRRED AT ITS NOISE AND SAT UP, HE LISTENED TO THE FRONT DOOR OPEN...THE HEAVY DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS...THE KNOCK OF HIS OWN DOOR TURN... AND THEN...



GOURBEAU!

THE HEADLESS CORPSE STUMBLED TOWARD ANDRÉ, ITS HAND DESTIGULATING TOWARD ITS NECK, POINTING...



YOUR HEAD? YOU'VE COME FOR YOUR HEAD? OH, LORD, OH! I'—I CAN'T GIVE IT TO YOU! THERE...ON THE FLOOR...THERE IS WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.

THE DECAPITATED BODY HESITATED, AS IF BEMODERED AS TO WHAT TO DO. THEN IT CRASHED FORWARD AGAIN... REACHING FOR ANDRÉ... REACHING... REACHING...



NO! NO! KEEP AWAY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y...

MAIGNE BARITTE HEARD THE EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM THAT ECHOED THROUGH HER ROOMING HOUSE AND RUSHED TO ANDRÉ'S ROOM WITH A CANDLE. BUT AS SHE REACHED THE DOOR, IT OPENED, THE BODY OF CLAUDE GOURBEAU STUMBLED OUT, AND ON ITS SHOULDERS, CRIMSON DRIPPING FROM ITS TORN AND RUPTURED BLOOD VESSELS, SAT THE SAKRILEGIOUS TORN-OFF HEAD OF ANDRÉ VACHE.



CHOKE...

HIE, HIE! WELL, THAT'S ONE WAY TO GET AHEAD IN THE HORROR-EXCITORIES! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO GHOST LK'S MUCK-WAD FOR THIS ISSUE! HOPE YOU WON'T BORED STIFF! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR... WHEN WE'LL BE HEADING



BACK YOUR WAY WITH MORE TOP HORROR YARN! TILL THEN, THINK ABOUT JOINING THE E.G. FAN-ARNDT CLUB! DON'T BE A SUCKER AND DO IT! JUST THINK ABOUT IT!

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GASP! CHOKE!! IT'S BACK!!



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NO. 1
ALL-NEW!

R.I.P.
TALES
FROM THE
CRYPT
1950-1955

WHAT,
ME
DEAD?

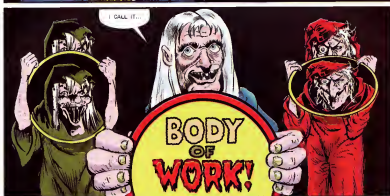
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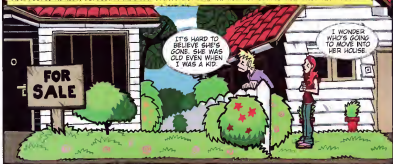
01



FIRST PAPER CUT  ISSUE!



NOTHING MUCH HAPPENS IN THE TOWN OF CRANWELL, NEW JERSEY, THAT'S WHY, WHEN ELDERLY GLADYS PRICE DIED, PEOPLE NOTICED, ESPECIALLY MIKE AND LINDA ANDERSON, THE MARRIED COUPLE WHO LIVED NEXT DOOR.



DURING THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, ALL THE CUSTOMERS AT THE LOCAL DINER WHERE MIKE WORKED AS A COOK, AND LINDA, AS A WAITRESS, HAD IDEAS...







ON THEIR WAY BACK HOME...

WELL, NOW
WE KNOW WHERE
HE GOES AT NIGHT
AND WHAT
HE'S DOING.

HE'S ONE
SICK PUPPY.

A FEW DAYS LATER....

CHECK OUT THESE
PHOTOS. BOB AT THE
DRUGSTORE GAVE THEM
TO ME. THEY'RE COPIES OF
THE ONES THAT KROLL
DROPPED OFF TO BE
DEVELOPED.



THESE MUST BE
SOME OF HIS PAINTINGS!
LOOK AT ALL THOSE CORPSES!
YOU DON'T THINK HE
ACTUALLY DIGGS THEM
UP, DO YOU?

IF HE HAD,
MARTY AT THE
POLICE STATION
WOULD'VE SAID
SOMETHING AT OUR
WEEKLY POKER
GAME.

A MAAT



I GUESS
IT TAKES
ALL KINDS.

MAYBE KROLL
GOES TO THE
CEMETERY FOR
INSPIRATION.



AFTER THAT, THINGS WERE QUIET FOR A WHILE. OR AT LEAST
AS QUIET AS IT GETS IN ANY SMALL TOWN.

YOU RUINED
THESE
PANCAKES

IT'S A NEW
RECIPE I'M
TRYING.

WHAT'S IT
CALLED? "HOW TO
LOSE CUSTOMERS
AND GET US
FIRED"?



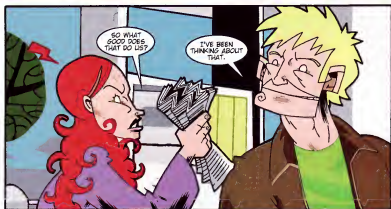
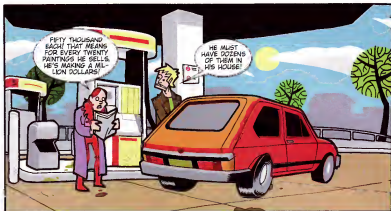
THEN ONE DAY, SOME-
THING HAPPENED THAT
CHANGED EVERYTHING...

TAKE A LOOK
AT THIS ARTICLE
IN THE CRANWELL
WEEKLY.

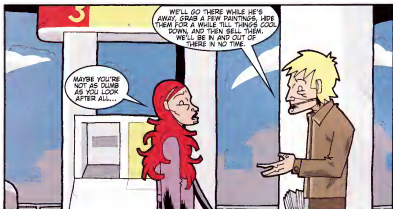
READ IT.

I HOPE IT'S
NOT ANOTHER RECIPE.
HEY, IT'S ABOUT OUR
NEIGHBOR, JACK
KROLL.









A WEEK
WENT BY
AND THEN
THE DAY
CAME...

KROLL'S GETTING
INTO HIS CAR. IN A
FEW MINUTES THAT
CREEP WILL BE
ON HIS WAY TO
NEW YORK.

IT TAKES AT
LEAST AN HOUR AND A
HALF TO GET TO THE CITY,
PLUS WITH THE TRAFFIC AT
THIS HOUR, YOU CAN ADD
AT LEAST ANOTHER
HALF HOUR.

ACCORDING TO THE
ART GALLERY, THE OPENING
PARTY SHOULD GO ON PAST
MIDNIGHT. SO WE'RE LOOKING
AT FOUR OR FIVE HOURS
AT LEAST.

LET'S WAIT A
COUPLE OF HOURS,
THEN WE'LL MAKE
OUR MOVE.

I'M
SCARED.

THAT'S ASSUMING
THAT HE DOESN'T
STAY AT A HOTEL IN
NEW YORK FOR THE
NIGHT. BUT WE CAN'T
COUNT ON THAT.

THINK
ABOUT
FLORIDA.

TWO HOURS LATER.

WE'RE IN HIS
BACKYARD!
WE'RE HALFWAY
THERE.

HEY, KEEP
YOUR SHIRT ON,
TOM CRUISE--THIS
ISN'T MISSION
IMPOSSIBLE!

NOW REMEMBER,
YOU'RE STANDING
WATCH OUTSIDE. CALL
ME ON YOUR CELL IF
THERE ARE ANY SIGNS
OF TROUBLE.

OKAY.

MIKE PRIE'S OPEN A WINDOW AND LOWERS
HIMSELF INTO HIS NEIGHBOR'S BASEMENT.

LOOK AT ALL
THIS JUNK. IT LOOKS
LIKE A RUMMAGE
SALE AT STEPHEN
KING'S HOUSE.

IN ANOTHER ROOM.

PAY DIRT! IT'S
A TREASURE TROVE!
THERE'S ENOUGH
HERE TO PAY FOR OUR
RETIREMENT A HUN-
DRED TIMES
OVER!

MIKE EAGERLY GRABS AS MANY
PAINTINGS AS HE CAN CARRY
AND RETURNS TO HIS HOUSE...

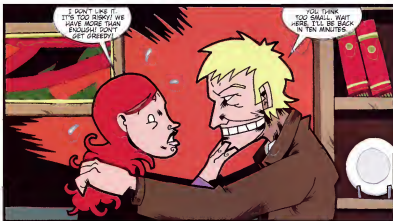
LOOK AT
THEM! THEY'RE
THE LIGHTEST THINGS
YOU'VE EVER SEEN
AND WORTH THEIR
WEIGHT IN
GOLD!

I DON'T
BELIEVE IT.
WE DID IT!

NOT YET!
I'M GOING BACK
AND MAKING
ANOTHER RUN!

BUT WE'VE
GOT PLENTY
HERE!

I'LL JUST GET
A FEW MORE. I'M
TELLING YOU HE HAS
A WHOLE BASEMENT
FULL OF THEM!



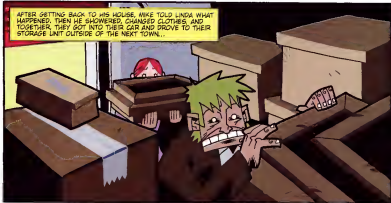
BACK AT KROLL'S HOUSE...







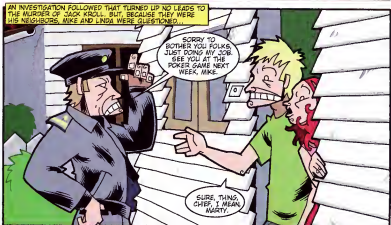
AFTER GETTING BACK TO HIS HOUSE, MIKE TOLD LINDA WHAT HAPPENED. THEN HE SHOWERED, CHANGED CLOTHES, AND TOGETHER, THEY GOT INTO THEIR CAR AND DROVE TO THEIR STORAGE UNIT OUTSIDE OF THE NEXT TOWN...



A FEW DAYS LATER, THE OWNER OF THE NEW YORK ART GALLERY CALLED THE CRANWELL POLICE TO REPORT THAT THEY HAD BEEN UNABLE TO REACH KROLL. THE POLICE CHECKED KROLL'S HOUSE AND FOUND HIS BODY...



AN INVESTIGATION FOLLOWED THAT TURNED UP NO LEADS TO THE MURDER OF JACK KROLL. BUT, BECAUSE THEY WERE HIS NEIGHBORS, MIKE AND LINDA WERE QUESTIONED...



A YEAR WENT BY, AND LIFE WENT ON IN THE TOWN OF CRANWELL, AND PEOPLE FORGOT ABOUT THE ARTIST WHO WAS MURDERED, BUT THERE WERE TWO PEOPLE WHO DID NOT FORGET...

NOW'S THE TIME TO SELL! I'VE GOT ART DEALERS IN THREE STATES THAT HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BUYING HIS PICTURES.

ACCORDING TO THIS WEBSITE, NOW THAT KROLL'S BEEN DEAD FOR A YEAR, THE VALUE OF HIS PAINTINGS HAVE GONE UP A LOT.

THAT NIGHT, MIKE AND LINDA DROVE TO THEIR STORAGE UNIT TO RETRIEVE SOME OF JACK KROLL'S PAINTINGS...

LUCKILY, THIS STORAGE FACILITY HAS TWENTY-FOUR HOUR ACCESS.

I DON'T LIKE COMING HERE AT NIGHT. IT'S SPOOKY. WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

PROBABLY SOMEONE GOING TO THEIR OWN STORAGE SPACE.

WHAT'S THAT HORRIBLE SMELL?

WHO CARES? JUST HELP ME LOAD THESE PAINTINGS INTO THE TRUNK.

BUT BEFORE MIKE AND LINDA COULD TAKE ANY MORE OF THE PAINTINGS OUT, THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF SOMETHING SCRAPING AGAINST THE ASPHALT ON THE GROUND, AND THEN THAT TERRIBLE SMELL SUDDENLY GOT MUCH, MUCH WORSE...

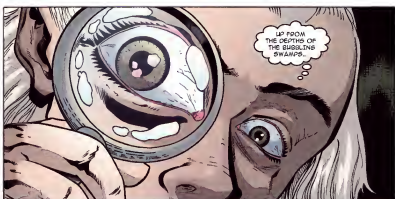
AND THE OTHERS... THAT BLUE DRESS... THE STRIPED SHIRT... THEY'RE KROLL'S MODELS!!

OH, MY LORD! ZOCHOKEK CORPSES! JUST LIKE THE ONES IN KROLL'S PAINTINGS! ONLY THESE ARE REAL! AND THAT ONE IS DRESSED IN KROLL'S CLOTHES!

MR. EXES

THE NEXT DAY THE POLICE FOUND MIKE AND LINDA DEAD. THEY'D BOTH HAD HEART ATTACKS. THE ODDS OF THAT HAPPENING, ACCORDING TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINER, WERE ASTRONOMICAL. THE PAINTINGS WERE RECOVERED, AND SENT TO JACK KROLL'S ONLY LIVING RELATIVE; AN OLD AUNT, WHOM, FOR SOME REASON, THOUGHT THEY WERE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS SHE'D EVER SEEN.





TOMMY!

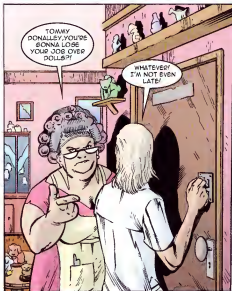
ARE YOU STILL
PLAYING WITH
THOSE HORRIBLE
DOLLS?

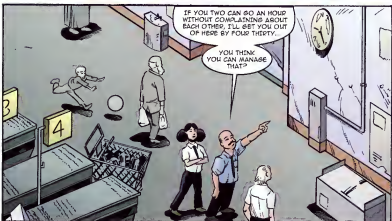
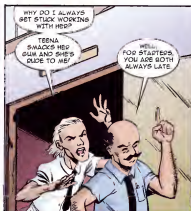
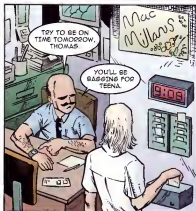
YOU'RE
GONNA BE LATE
FOR WORK!

THEY AREN'T
DOLLS, MOM!

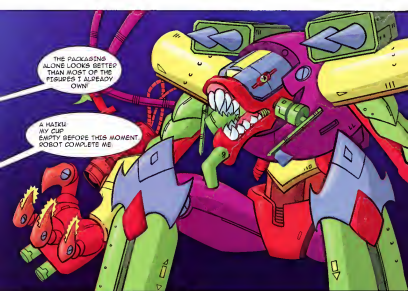
THEY'RE FULLY-
POSSIBLE MICRO-
ARTICULATED ACTION
FIGURES!

AND I WASN'T
EVEN LOOKING
AT 'EM!









THE PACKAGING
ALONE LOOKS BETTER
THAN MOST OF THE
FIGURES I ALREADY
OWN!

A HAIKU
MY CUP
EMPTY BEFORE THIS MOMENT
ROBOT COMPLETE ME



YIKES!

AM I SEE YOU'VE
FOUND OUR LATEST
IMPORT PIECE

EXQUISITE
ISN'T IT?

IT'S OKAY IF YOU
ARE INTO FOREIGN
STUFF, I GUESS

IS IT
ON SALE?



UH, NO.

PROBABLY BETTER
IF WE DON'T HANDLE IT.
SERIOUS COLLECTORS WILLING
TO DROP A HUNDRED BUCKS ON
A PIECE LIKE THIS ARE PICKY
ABOUT CONDITION



I CAN FIND A
DOZEN OF THESE
ONLINE FOR
HALF THAT!

BE MY GUEST

I'LL BE PRICING
UP YO-SI-MON CARDS
IF YOU NEED ANY
MORE HELP.



BUT LATER THAT
NIGHT...

I CAN'T EVEN
FIND A PICTURE
OF IT!

WHY DIDN'T
I ASK HIM WHAT
THE STUPID THING
WAS CALLED?



TOMMY! I THOUGHT I TOLD
YOU TO GO TO BED!

I WON'T
SLEEP
A WINK
IF I HAVE
TO WORRY
ABOUT WHAT
YOU ARE UP
TO DOWN
HERE!







ARE YOU HOME FROM WORK, TOMMY?

YEAH, MOM!



THE HOURS SEEM TO FLY BY AS THOMAS EXAMINES HIS ILL-GOTTEN GAIN UNTIL...

DUHH! I'M TOO TIRED TO KEEP MY EYES FOCUSED ANY LONGER



JUST ONE MORE DAY OF WORK TO GET THROUGH AND THEN I'LL HAVE THE WEEKEND TO LOOK AT IT AS MUCH AS I LIKE

NO NEED TO BE GOSSEY. I'VE GOT MY WHOLE LIFE LEFT TO ENJOY IT.



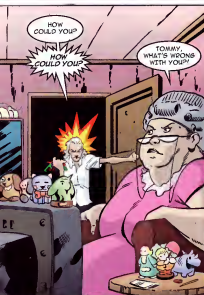


EVEN IF THE
DRAGON'S HOARD WILL GIVE
ME HALF OF WHAT I PAID FOR
THAT IMPORT FIGURE, I STILL
WON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO PAY
MACMILLANS BACK BY
TOMORROW!

WAYRE
THEY'LL BUY
SOME OF
MY OTH-

ESP!

NOOOOOOOOOO!





KRASSSHH



HEY, WHAT'S THAT?!











Translation:
"SUPER EVIL DEMON ROBOT!
"COMES TO LIFE!
"WRECKS YOUR HOME!
"NOW 250% MORE CURSED!"



FOR SERIOUS
COLLECTORS ONLY

250%呪いレベルUP!

THE END

HAI HAI HAI! TOMMY GOT MORE ACTION FROM HIS FULLY-POSEABLE, MICRO-ARTICULATED FIGURES THAN HE BARBAINED FOR!

KLIK
KLIK

SEE, KIDDES—
ALWAYS BE SURE
TO READ THE LABEL!
OR DO YOU JUST
THINK THAT'S JUST
A CROC-O-ZOID?

SERIOUS COLLECTORS ARE NOT
TO BE TRIFLED WITH! THAT'S WHY
WHEN I LIST MY MORTHESS JUNK
ON EEBDAY...

...I MAKE SURE TO ACCURATELY DEGRADE! AFTER
ALL, IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU LEARN IN A CRYPT,
IT'S HOW TO GET YOUR COLLECTIBLES SLASSED! AND I
CERTAINLY MADE SURE TO PACK EVERYTHING SECURELY!
I FIND THAT PINE BOXES WORK BEST FOR ME—
ALTHOUGH THE SHRED-EX GUY DOESN'T
SEEM TO APPRECIATE IT!

THUMP
KNOK
KNOK

THUMP
KNOK
KNOK

SO, LET'S NOT WAIT
A HALF CENTURY UNTIL WE
MEET AGAIN! BE BACK IN JUST
SIXTY DAYS FOR MORE TALES
FROM THE CRYPT!

The Return of **TALES FROM THE CRYPT**



It's one of the biggest surprises in the world of comics and graphic novel publishing! Shortly before the 2007 New York Comic Con, Papercutz announced that we would be publishing all-new **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** comics. After more than 50 years, EC Comics' legendary flagship title returns with all-new shocking SuspendStories, narrated by the original Crypt-Keeper, Old Witch, and Vault Keeper. Each issue will feature two 20-page tales of terror in the EC tradition!

Reactions ranged from excitement—from fans thrilled to see the most famous horror comicbook ever return after over fifty years, to shock—that it was to be coming from a publisher primarily known for its graphic novels such as *Nancy Drew* and *The Hardy Boys* which contain material suitable for all-ages, as the **HBO TALES FROM THE CRYPT** series certainly contained a fair amount of adult content.

"People forget that the original **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** comicbook, published by the EC Comics back in the 50s, was also intended for all-ages, and its primary readership was young boys," Papercutz Editor-in-Chief Jim Salicrup is quick to point out. But that may be exactly what fans find so controversial. The original **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** comics, featuring stories dreamed up by EC publisher William M. Gaines and his editor Al Feldstein, and drawn by Feldstein, as well as Graham Ingles, Jack Davis, Jack Kamen, Joe Orlando, Wally Wood, Harvey Kurtzman, Bill Elder, Reed Crandall, Johnny Craig, Al Williamson, George Evans, and colored by Marie Severin, started a horror comics craze that soon drew the attention of psychiatrist Dr. Frederick Wertham.

Wertham reacted to horror comics' popularity with children by writing a book called "Seduction of the Innocent," which maintained that comics led to juvenile delinquency and even worse behavior. Parents were understandably alarmed, and soon the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency was taking a hard look at comicbooks. EC Comics publisher Bill Gaines spoke before the Subcommittee, but was unable to convince them that his comics were entertaining stories told in good taste. Ultimately, comicbook publishers adversely affected by the negative publicity created the Comics Magazine Association of America which would review comics and award a seal of approval to assure parents that the comic's contents were safe, wholesome entertainment.

Unfortunately, it was too late for many publishers, as the negative publicity had so hurt sales of comics that many comicbook companies went out of business. EC Comics, tried to hang in there, but despite canceling their horror comics, and creating new titles such as "Valor" and "Psychoanalysis," only MAD comics, in a new magazine format, survived.

The question is, was **TALES FROM CRYPT** really all that bad? "Of course not!" Salicrup insists. "Ironically, many of the original stories would be approved by today's revised Comics Code, but sure, there were some stories that still wouldn't get by. The point here is that the stories that Papercutz will be creating will be aimed at readers age 10 and up. Instead of excessive blood and gore, we'll be sticking to the **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** tradition of stories filled with interesting characters, lots of dark humor, and of course, the trademarked EC "shock" endings!"

But ultimately it's you who will decide if we succeeded or failed. Send your comments to us at salicrup@papercutz.com or to **THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER, PAPERUTZ, 40 Exchange Place, Ste. 1308, New York, NY 10005**. We'll run the most interesting comments in our next issue, which is coming your way in just 60 days.

When reached for comment, The Crypt-Keeper said, "It's good to be back, boils and ghouls—and it's about time! Ahahahah!"

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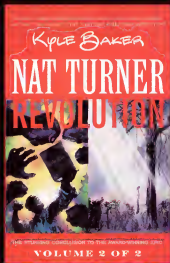
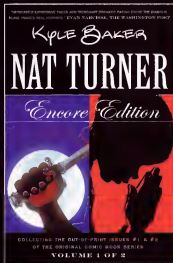
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